

Open house feature: Soundwalks and managing pain

March 4 2013

The sounds you hear while taking a walk may soon play a role in managing chronic pain, according to researchers in Simon Fraser University's pain studies lab.

Capturing those sounds and making them accessible to patients in the waiting rooms of clinics is work currently underway by researchers with the Transforming Pain Research Group, led by Diane Gromala, a professor in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT) at SFU's Surrey campus.

The researchers are [developing new technologies](#) that may improve the lives of people who live with long-term chronic pain.

[Graduate student](#) Mark Nazemi is designing soundscape compositions based on "soundwalks" – [natural sounds](#) captured from a variety of environments.

His aim is to provide patients in medical [waiting rooms](#) with access to the soundwalks via [headphones](#) to help lower anxiety and stress while they are waiting.

Influenced by soundscape research carried out earlier by SFU professor emeritus Barry Truax, Nazemi is exploring whether these "listening treatments" may assist patients in more clearly communicating symptoms to their doctors, a project he'll explore in collaboration with the Vancouver [Arthritis](#) Research Centre this summer.

Nazemi will be in Japan next week presenting the work at the Design Principles & Practices 2013 conference, but the research will be among projects that visitors to SFU Surrey's Global Community Open House on Mar. 7 from 4:30-8:30 p.m. can learn more about.

Sound is at the core of another SIAT project called Sonic Cradle, which uses an individual's breathing to shape musical sounds as they sit suspended in a totally dark chamber.

Sonic Cradle, along with the pain lab's virtual walking meditation project and other virtual therapies for chronic pain, will also be featured at the free, public event. See more details at www.surrey.sfu.ca/openhouse.

More information: SFU Surrey Open House info:
www.surrey.sfu.ca/openhouse

Provided by Simon Fraser University

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